# Emergency Management and Response Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC)

## INFOGRAM 16-08 April 24, 2008

***NOTE:*** *This INFOGRAM will be distributed weekly to provide members of the Emergency Services Sector with information concerning the protection of their critical infrastructures. For further information, contact the Emergency Management and Response- Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) at (301) 447-1325 or by e-mail at* emr-isac@dhs.gov.

## Protecting Law Enforcement Personnel

Statistics provided by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (http://www.nleomf.com/) indicate that the fatal shooting of law enforcement personnel increased by 26 per cent in 2007, when 68 police officers were shot and killed. The Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) learned that some police commanders fear this pattern could rise again in 2008, considering the recent threats made against law enforcement departments by violent gangs and extremist groups.

According to the Justice Research and Statistics Association (http://www.jrsa.org), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) (http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/) cited ten risk factors to substantiate that police officers are at extraordinary risk for being assaulted or killed in the performance of duties. For example, NIOSH explained that daily contact with the public, working with volatile people, patrolling high-crime areas, and responding alone or in small numbers make law enforcement personnel highly vulnerable to assault or murder by members of the general public.

However, the EMR-ISAC identified a new trend spreading across the nation that emphasizes situational awareness, defensive strategies, weapons training, and the following tactics to reduce vulnerabilities to personal safety and mission accomplishment:

- Implement broader use of mandatory handcuffing.
- Enforce requirement to wear body armor when available.
- Analyze more video from dashboard cameras in patrol cars to critique procedures.
- Eliminate complacent attitudes and behaviors, particularly among veteran officers.

As the critical infrastructure protection and resilience advocate for the Emergency Services Sector, the EMR-ISAC applauds law enforcement organizations that are practicing the above actions, and training their personnel to consistently apply a vigilant and defensive posture during all responses, even the routine ones.

## Report on the I-35W Bridge Collapse in Minneapolis

This week, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) announced the release of the "Interstate 35W (I-35W) Bridge Collapse and Response Technical Report." The report examines the area's emergency preparedness for, and response to the 1 August 2007 bridge collapse in Minneapolis, MN.

The local response to the bridge disaster—and the coordination with metropolitan, state, and federal partners—demonstrated the extraordinary value of comprehensive disaster planning and training. The city's ability to respond had evolved over several years of investing heavily in all the elements that make a crucial difference when disaster strikes. Their investment covered widespread training on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) that extended beyond city department heads and into all employee levels.

In its report into the incident and subsequent response by emergency personnel, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) observed that the USFA highlighted both positive and negative elements to help other emergency departments and agencies cope with similar challenges in the future. The notable successes and lessons learned can be found at Chapter VII (page 43) in the report (60 pages, 1.9MB PDF) at: http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/tr_166.pdf.

## CSB Hazardous Waste Case Study

As the frontline in emergencies, first responders confront immediate danger in response to incidents that involve unknown types and quantities of stored hazmat. For this reason the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) supports the critical infrastructure protection (CIP) information sharing that enhances responder protection and survivability. An example is the case study issued last week by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board (CSB) of its investigation of the October 2006 fire at the Environmental Quality (EQ) Company in Apex, North Carolina.

The fire at the waste transfer facility occurred at night, when the site was neither staffed nor monitored. Responders had no access to information about the chemicals present at the time of the fire, i.e., at least 2,700 containers of toxic heavy metals, carcinogenic additives, pesticides, and preservatives. As noted in the case study, the only fire control equipment on site consisted of portable fire extinguishers; the facility lacked fire walls and automatic fire suppression systems. What began as a "sofa-size" fire destroyed the facility, injured 30 people, including 13 responders, and forced a two-day evacuation of nearly 17,000 citizens.

CSB investigators found that EQ had had limited contact with the Apex Fire Department before the fire. "Specific, accurate, up-to-date information on chemical hazards is essential to emergency response planning," said Chemical Safety Board Member William Wark. "For first responders, having prompt access to such information is a matter of basic life safety." The CSB recommended the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require hazardous waste facilities to periodically provide specific, written information to state and local response officials on types, quantities, and locations of hazmat. The Board asked the Environmental Technology Council to develop standardized guidance on waste handling and storage to prevent releases and fires, and recommended the Council petition the National Fire Protection Association to develop a specific fire protection standard for the hazardous waste industry.

In addition to the Apex case study, the CSB, an independent federal agency charged with investigating all aspects of chemical accidents, released a 16-minute safety video, "Emergency in Apex – Hazardous Waste Fire and Community Evacuation." The free DVD and others are available at http://www.csb.gov/index.cfm?folder=video_archive&page=index. The final report (14 pages, 320KB PDF) can be viewed and downloaded at http://www.csb.gov/completed_investigations/docs/EQFinalReport.pdf.

## ESS Fights Chemical Hazard

In a critical infrastructure protection (CIP) initiative, municipal Emergency Services Sector (ESS) personnel joined community stakeholders to oppose a refinery's multimillion expansion project that would use hydrofluoric (HF) acid to boost gas and diesel output. A state committee that oversees emergency preparedness declared that the refinery should instead use less hazardous sulfuric acid. Many U.S. refineries have switched from hydrofluoric acid to safer alternatives.

After studying the Chemical Safety Board (CSB) report on the October 2006 fire at the Environmental Quality (EQ) Company in Apex, North Carolina, where the EQ Company failed to share critical hazmat information with the Apex (North Carolina) Fire Department, the Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) views the ESS collaboration and opposition as an example of proactive leadership that elevates protection of responder critical infrastructures as well as community safety. Because the refinery's use of hydrofluoric acid would "place first responders at great risk in the event of spill or accident," said the president of the local police officers association, ESS leaders there are sending a unified message about the dangers of HF acid. Their statements can be viewed at http://www.NoHydrofluoricAcid.com.

More than a million pounds of hydrofluoric acid are produced each year in the U.S. The chemical, ranked as one of the most hazardous compounds to human health and ecosystems, is used in numerous industries and is extremely dangerous while in storage or transport (railcar and truck). Accidental releases or explosions cause the liquid hydrofluoric acid to vaporize, forming a cloud that hangs low to the ground and can travel and injure or kill people on site and up to five miles away. It is registered by the U.S. government as a serious systemic poison. Further, the chemical's presence enhances a jurisdiction's appeal as a terrorist target.

Additional information about HF acid is available at the web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/hydrofluoricacid). Specific data about locations and quantities of HF and other hazmat at facilities can be found at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's site: http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/index.htm, and at http://www.scorecard.org. Honeywell, the world's largest producer of hydrofluoric acid, offers HF acid emergency response training for responders. To learn about the program, visit http://www51.honeywell.com/sm/hfacid/tech-service-trg-sub/hf-emergency-response-trg.html.

## FAIR USE NOTICE



The National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Infrastructure Protection is the central point for notifications regarding infrastructure threats, disruptions, intrusions, and suspicious activities. Emergency Services Sector personnel are requested to report any incidents or attacks involving their infrastructures using at least the first and second points of contact seen below:

1) NICC - Voice: 202-282-9201, Fax: 703-487-3570, E-Mail: *nicc@dhs.gov*
2) Your local FBI office - Web: *http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/fo.htm*
3) EMR-ISAC - Voice: 301-447-1325, E-Mail: *emr-isac@dhs.gov*, fax: 301-447- 1034, Web: *www.usfa.dhs.gov/subjects/emr-isac*, Mail: J-247, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727